6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
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below the Nâyar is permitted to enter. To the north, south, east, and west, there is a level entrance into this hollow square, and beyond this entrance no man of inferior caste may go. The Pânan receives a certain quantity, about 10 lb. of raw rice for his performance.

In the afternoon a small crowd of Vettuvars come to the temple carrying with them swords, not very dangerous ones, and about ten small baskets made of cocoanut palm leaves, containing salt.* These baskets are carried slung on a pole as before. These men dance and shout in much excitement, cutting their heads with their own swords in their frenzy. Some of them represent devils or some kind of inferior evil spirits, and dance madly, under the influence of these spirits which they represent. Then comes the Arayân as on the previous day with his little procession, and lastly comes the blacksmith with the sword.

It is explained by the Malayalis that the individuals of the various castes who hold the office of tailor, goldsmith and so on to the temple, do so, not for the sake of what they receive from the temple, but in order to mark their position of superiority in their caste. The ceremonial allotted to each also no doubt marks his position in the ladder of caste.

The procession in the evening of this the seventh and last day is a great affair. Eight elephants which kept line beautifully, took part in this when I witnessed it. One of them very handsomely caparisoned had on its back a priest (Mûssad) carrying a sword smothered in garlands of red flowers representing the goddess. Up to this time, when she is represented by a sword, it will be remembered she has been represented by an image. The elephant bearing the priest with the sword is bedizened on the forehead with two golden discs, one on each side of the forehead, and over the centre of the forehead hangs a long golden ornament.† He bears other jewels, and over his back is a large canopy-like red cloth richly wrought. Before the elephant walked a Nâyar carrying in his right hand in front of him a sword of the kind

* The use of salt here is obscure as to the purpose. I remember a case of a Nâyar's house having been plundered, the idol was knocked down and salt was put in the place where it should have stood. The act was looked on as most insulting.

† The discs on the elephant's forehead are common in Malabar in affairs of ceremony. The Mappila poets are very fond of comparing a beautiful girl's breast to these cup-like discs.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
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643 646

rights. Thus did these *kúttams* (assemblies) exercise a wholesome influence, and act as a powerful check upon the rulers and ministers of the middle ages.[1] They also dealt with wider questions of castes and other matters affecting the welfare of the people. In former times there were also minor councils 623 of *Pramánis* or leaders of the people in every *Desam* exercising similar social functions. A survival of this system even now exists in every village, and their deliberations and decisions upon social matters and caste disputes have great weight. In important matters such as the outcasting of a member of the caste, etc., His Highness the Raja who has always been the [643] social as well as the political head of the State would deliberate [692] upon them with the help of the Brahman *vaidiks*, and his decisions become final. The individual who is placed under a ban [688] is prohibited from entering any temple, bathing in the public tanks, and is, in short, ostracised.

643

Administration of justice.

The Rajas were in former times the fountain of all justice, but were assisted by *Karyakkars* or ministers 642 and Brahmans in administering it. All caste 623 disputes and offences were left to the caste assemblies to deal with, while civil disputes were either left to the arbitration of 681 the caste assemblies or of three or four prominent men. There 564 was no written code, but the punishments assigned by custo[illegible] fitted the crimes, and they varied with the status of the ca[illegible] and of the person. The nobles enjoyed the privilege of freedom from confinement. The Brahmans and women were never put to death; the former were punished for grave offences by loss of caste and banishment, and the latter by being sold as slaves. The punishment of death was reserved for such heinous [688] offences as sacrilege, the wilful murder of a Brahman or a cow. The following is a summary of the account given by 175 Duarte Barbosa, pp. 116—117, regarding the methods of dealing 564 with criminals and the nature of the punishments inflicted on 685 them in former times:—When any member of a low caste committed robbery about which a complaint had been made to the king or the governor, orders were issued for his apprehension, and if he was caught and he confessed his guilt, he was generally impaled. His head was severed, and the body being placed on its back, the arms and legs were fastened with ropes to four posts, while the multitude to show their contempt spat upon it. If, however, the malefactor was a Moor, he was beheaded. The

1. Letters from Malabar by J. C. Visscher, pages 76-77.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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stolen property went to the ruler of the State. If the stolen property was discovered after the escape of the thief, it was returned to the owner after a certain number of days, and a fourth part was appropriated by the State. If, however, a thief refused to confess his guilt, he was confined for a period of eight days during which every method of torture known to the keepers of the prisons was tried to extort his confession. If he continued in reiterating his innocence, it was left to the accuser to elect whether he should be let off or forced to undergo trial by ordeal. In the latter case, on an auspicious day, the accused would be allowed to bathe and recite his daily prayers, after which he was conducted to the idol in the temple. Before the idol he swore that he had not committed the theft nor did he know the guilty person, and plunged his two fingers up to the middle joint into a caldron of boiling oil. If he was burnt, he was accounted guilty of the crime; if unhurt, he was liberated. Another form of proving the guilt or innocence of a prisoner who would not confess his crime, was to make him thrust his hand into a mantle in which a sacred and poisonous snake had been wrapped and force him to lift it out. If he was bitten, he was guilty. A third form was the wading through a tank full of alligators before a pagoda at Palliport, fifteen miles north of Cochin, and if he survived he was considered innocent."[1] Concerning the procedure against the debtors, a curious custom seems to have prevailed, which is thus described by *Varthema*:—

"Let us suppose the case that some one has to pay me twenty-five ducats, and the debtor promises me to pay them many times and does not pay them. I, not being willing to wait any longer, nor to give him any indulgence, shall take a green branch in my hand, shall go softly behind the debtor, and with the said branch shall draw a circle on the ground surrounding him; and if I can enclose him in a circle, shall say to him these words three times: 'I command you by the head of the Brahmans and the king that you do not depart hence, until you have paid me and satisfied me as much as I ought to have from thee,' and he will satisfy me or truly he will die without any other guard, and should he quit the said circle, the king will put him to death."

"It has been already said, that the nobles enjoyed exemption and privileges, and that they could not be taken and put in irons; but if a noble were to rob or kill any one or a cow or to sleep with a woman of low caste or of the Brahmans

1. Letters from Malabar by J. C. Visscher, pages 68–69.

11: India G-4, 5 (1960-1961) 1962 AWll Kerala AWll

494 652 the services, which have declined from Rs. 23.8 lakhs in 1956-57 to Rs. 17.4 lakhs in 1959-60.

499 491 652 8.24 The allotments during the Second Plan for the construction of roads and bridges were Rs. 2.146 crores and Rs. 1.932 crores respectively. The expenditure on roads and bridges in the first four years of the Plan amounted to Rs. 2.871 crores and Rs. 1.041 crores. The expenditure on maintenance in the three years 1956–59 was about Rs. 2.956 crores. The achievement in respect of road construction, improvement and upgrading and construction of major bridges lagged seriously behind targets in the fourth year of the Second Plan.

8.25 The Central Government's expenditure on the construction and improvement of national highways was as follows :

1958-59	Actual	Rs. 11 lakhs
1959-60	Revised Estimate	Rs. 32 lakhs
1960-61	Budget Estimate	Rs. 55 lakhs

493 494 8.26 The number of buses and trucks rose sharply in the State during the four years of the Second Plan ; but particulars are lacking regarding the amount of public or private investment on vehicles. The nationalized passenger services planned to add 460 buses to the fleet, 300 for rehabilitation and new 160 for operating on a stretch of 400 miles of roads. If achieved, this would involve an investment of the order of Rs. 2 crores. Between 1956-57 and 1958-59 the capital at charge rose by Rs. 78.4 lakhs only.

THE INLAND WATERWAYS

487 8.27 The inland waterways of the State comprise: (*a*) the west coast canal system, stretching continuously except for a land-locked break between Azhikkal and Badagara (29.5 miles) a distance of over 347 miles from Trivandrum to Hosdurg ; (*b*) cross canals, 387 miles long, mostly in the south of the State serving the commercial region in the midlands, and about 521 navigable miles in its various rivers. The Ashtamudi and Vembanad lakes provide extensive navigation facilities for traffic to and from Alleppey, Kottayam, Quilon and Cochin.

8.28 The waterways present a variety of problems though none of them are insuperable. These should be tackled systematically as the waterways promise superior economic advantages. Natural limitations arise from weather and rainfall ; most rivers are navigable upto their middle reaches only during the period of the monsoons. In many places they are narrow and shallow (e.g., on the Trivandrum-Quilon route). Dredging is often insufficient and even the dredgers are unsuitable for dredging the narrow sections. Tugging services are required in hazardous areas, e.g., Pathiramanal-Munroe light area in the Vembanad lake. Bridges are often low, as in Varkala and on the Trivandrum-Quilon route, and they do not permit operation, particularly of passenger boats. Landing places have not been provided in many places, and where they are, they are not maintained in proper condition for use. A great drawback of water transport is insecurity and pilferage of the cargo. The

487 503 505 [688]

534 796 [533] The accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong note although the rhythm was changed perpetually, was truly amazing. And the crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect fury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra. Early on the seventh and last day, when the morning procession is over, there comes to the temple a man of the Pānan caste (umbrella-makers and devil-dancers). He carries a small cadjan umbrella which he has made himself, adorned all round the edges with a fringe of the young leaves of the cocoanut palm. His approach is heralded and noised just as in the case of the others on the previous day. The umbrella should have a long handle, and, with it in his hand, he performs a dance before the temple. The temple is situated within a hollow square enclosure, which none in caste below the Nāyar is permitted to enter. To the north, south, east, and west, there is a level entrance into the hollow square, and beyond this entrance no man of inferior caste may go. The Pānan receives about 10 lbs. of raw rice for his performance. In the afternoon, a small crowd of Vettuvars come to the temple, carrying with them swords, and about ten small baskets made of cocoanut palm leaves, containing salt. These baskets are carried slung on a pole. The use of salt here is obscure.* I remember a case of a Nāyar's house having been plundered, the idol knocked down, and salt put in the place where it should have stood. The act was looked on as most insulting. The Vettuvans dance and shout in much excitement, cutting their heads with their own swords in their frenzy. Some

796 794 564 [293] [422] [685] [572] [786]

* The Vettuvans were once salt-makers.